



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

PHONICS AND READING POLICY



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
A Catholic Academy

February 2023



Phonics and early reading

The context of our school

At Our Lady Catholic Primary School we aim to provide every child with the foundation they need in order to thrive and equip them with the necessary skills to communicate creatively and imaginatively, therefore enabling them to succeed in the wider world. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

INTENT

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Our Lady School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Our Lady School, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Our Lady School, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

IMPLEMENT

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the [*Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress](#):
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable regular phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place across the week.

Teaching reading

- Reading is taught through three times a week guided reading sessions. These sessions are taught either in a whole class or small group session.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - decoding
 - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- Children are heard read once a week by an adult linked to their class.

Home reading

- Children are sent home with a decodable phonics reading book each week. This book matches their phonic level. Alongside this children are provided with a comprehension

book to share with their families. This book is not meant to be decodable but instead to be enjoyed with an adult.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult at least twice a week.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- All staff involved in the teaching of phonics in our school have been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and How to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

IMPACT

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- [Assessment for learning](#) is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- [Summative assessment](#) is used:
 - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.
- The [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment](#) is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

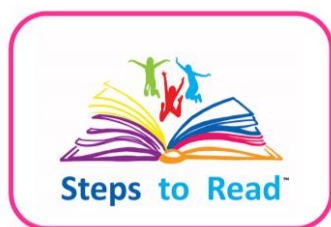
Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:

- their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
- the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
- the appropriate half-termly assessments.



Steps to read: whole class reading

Children who have progressed and finished the Little Wandle phonics program in Year 2 move to the daily steps to read whole class reading approach.

INTENT

At Our Lady Catholic Primary School we use the steps to read whole class Shared Reading approach to teach the skills of reading through carefully crafted units of work. These units empower our teachers to teach all aspects of word reading and comprehension through high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts.

We cultivate a love of Reading, Writing and communicating through vocabulary rich and high quality literature, using Literacy Counts Steps to Read scheme of work. By inspiring and developing an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage we develop a habit of Reading widely and often.

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread Reading for enjoyment.

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of Reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for Reading, Writing and spoken language
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Steps to Read:

- Is sequenced, coherent and progressive
- Uses language-rich texts for vocabulary teaching
- Includes all elements of comprehension, taught sequentially across an academic year
- Has a clear focus on the skills and strategies needed to be a proficient and confident reader
- Uses engaging texts to promote a life-long love of reading
- Includes poetry, non-fiction and fiction that enhances knowledge learning across the curriculum

IMPLEMENT

Daily whole class reading sessions in years 2-6

- Taught by a trained member of staff
- 30 minutes daily
- A focus on vocabulary development, the development of specific Reading skills and immersion in a wide range of texts. These
- Progressive, clearly sequenced units provided through the steps to read program
- Each steps to read unit has a clear focus on high quality texts ensuring adults scaffold and support all children to access the text
- High quality resources are always used and shared with the children
- Lessons use a range of fiction, poetry and nonfiction texts as a stimulus for deeper thinking develop contextual knowledge and understanding.
- Where applicable, real books/texts are shared face to face in class

Pre teaching/catch up to close the gap

- Any child that needs support to access the whole class reading text is support using our pre teaching strategy. This can involve any of the following:
 - Sending the text home to familiarise themselves with
 - Reading the text/questions 1:1 with a member of staff ahead of a session
 - Higher level vocabulary explained prior to a session

IMPACT

Assessment

- Each session teachers assess the children formatively, based on their understanding of the session
- Teacher led assessment is ongoing
- Summative assessment happens at the end of each term and is discussed with the senior leadership team in pupil progress meetings

Statutory assessment

- Children at the end of Years 2 and 6 sit the end of key stage assessments

Ensuring reading for pleasure

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)
'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Our Lady School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- Books that have been read in class are displayed and spoken about often.
- In Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

Reading at home in KS2

Children are expected to read at home at least 4 times a week with an adult. Every child has a reading record that parents/teachers/themselves write in to show their understanding and progress. This comes to school every day and is checked by a member of staff weekly.